

FAITH.

J. H. GARDNER.

Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Heb. 11:1.

True faith is based on evidence, a man can have no faith in a statement, that does not carry with it some evidence of its truthfulness. This evidence may be in the reasonableness of the statement, or it may be based on the confidence had in the one making the statement. Sometimes this is all the evidence that at first appears. But evidence of some nature must be forthcoming to give a ground of belief. What is necessary in order to render acceptable service to God? But without faith it is impossible to please him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. Heb. 11:6. One's faith in what God will do for him must be inclosed by what he learns from God's word concerning that point. No one can confidently look for that which God has never promised.

Faith is a pure belief of, and a confident trust in, the promises of God, even though one's feeling does not assent to it. This perfect faith enables one to rise above difficulties under the most trying circumstances, even when the feelings are nearly crushed. Among many notable cases, that of Abraham offering up Isaac at God's command, may be cited as one wherein his faith called him to do contrary to what his feelings would dictate. The promises of God are of no value to them that do not believe. I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterwards destroyed them that believed not. Jude 5. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Rom. 5:1. No matter what one's feelings are to start with, it is his duty, after fulfilling the conditions of his acceptance to believe that God has forgiven his past wrongs; we are promised forgiveness upon the condition that we keep his commandments. But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanseth us from all sin. I John 1:7. My Brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptation: knowing this that the trying of your faith worketh patience. James 1:2, 3.

Faith may be strengthened by daily exercise. It is not some great thing done, once for all, that gives a person faith, but an every day, simple, child like trust in God. Some make it a more difficult mat-

ter than God would have them, because they try to embrace too much at once. They take on the burdens of to-morrow, when the Lord only supplies strength for to-day. When to-morrow comes, grapple with its duties, but not until it does come. All should remember the precious promise, As thy days, so shall thy strength be. Deut. 33:25.

Turlock, April 20.

TOBACCO AND RELIGION.

J. J. VANDERREE.

Much has already been written on the subject of tobacco, but it is like the remark made by the queen of Sheba, "the half has not been told." The use of tobacco is so gigantic in its evils that we never can tell all there may be said against it. Some of us pride ourselves in being a free people but are so entangled in the snares of the tobacco god that it is hard for us to shake off the shackles that bind us so tightly. Oh, well, says one, I am a free man. Yes brother you are, but you are only a free man to do that which is right and just. No man is free to do that which is unbecoming. Let us look at this great question fairly and let it be discussed pro and con. What do we get from its use, excepting its use as a medicine? The city of New York, statistics tell us, spends *ten* times the amount of money for tobacco than it does for bread. No, my brother, if you, who are addicted to its use think you are free, just stop its use for a few days and then let your friends see how you will act and you tell how you feel, and you will find out that you are the worst kind of a slave to the tobacco habit. Let us cite a few of the many cases which I have in mind.

CASE NO. 1.—In speaking of the subject of tobacco with a good old deacon brother in the G. B. church, he informed me that the first thing he did in the morning was to make a grab for the pocket that contained the weed and take a chew while yet in bed, in consequence of which the morning prayer to God was utterly forgotten.

CASE NO. 2.—I know a minister who told me that he never could preach well unless he had a little of the filthy weed in his mouth while in the pulpit. Don't you think this is going too far?

CASE NO. 3.—A man came to my house a few days ago and while talking to him on the tobacco question he said this: "Many times I get disgusted with myself because of the evil habit that I often think I will just go and drown myself." Is this a fact that the habit once formed might ever lead one to commit suicide? But then they will seek it again.

CASE NO. 4.—A few years ago while at prayer-meeting one evening I happened to say something against the use of the weed, but to my utter astonishment the next morning our minister came to me in a very friendly way and said, Brother John, you will have to stop talking against tobacco, for he said, it is offending some of our brethren and if you say any more on this question they will not attend prayer-meeting any more. Well, I did not stop altogether, neither did they.

CASE NO. 5.—One man told me he had used it as a medicine for fifty years, to cure sore mouth on him when a boy and he dared not stop taking his medicine yet for fear that the sore mouth would return. A splendid cure is it not?

And so I could cite case after case without number. The whole of which would not be worth a straw in the way of testimony in any of our courts in favor of the nasty weed. How then shall we justify ourselves before the courts of heaven. I think I hear some one say does not the Bible teach us that he that is weak let him eat herbs? Yes, Brother the good old Book tells us that, but if you would *eat* the stuff in its proper sense what would become of you? When we remember that it contains one of the most deadly poisons, that of Nicotine, two drops of which are enough to kill most any dog. No, no, the fact remains that people do not, *dare not*, eat it as they do other herbs. It is true that it contains medicinal virtue, but when used as such let us stop taking the medicine when the disease for which we took it is cured. Let us remember the opium habit and beware.

Do you know that the Mormon church has decided that no man that uses the weed shall hold any official position in that church? *Is this progression?* Come now let us as honest men, quit and become strong through *Christ* who strengtheneth us. I know what I am writing about, I used the weed for upwards of twenty-two years. I know what a hold it gets on a man. And now a word to the ministering brethren and I am done.

Do not think that I write this to offend any one, but as my beloved brethren I warn you; remember that your standing is a high one, on the top of the walls of Zion where all eyes can see you and can take note of you; ye men that do the pleasure of your God, ought ye not to be very careful how you set examples before the rising generation, for the little folks notice you many times more perhaps than you notice them. Your responsibility is great for your stewardship here below. Think about this and it may be by your good example you may indirectly and perhaps unbeknown to you here, be the means of saving many souls from death.